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## AMERICAN CITIZENS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

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The period of civil strife through which our neighbor on the south is passing has presented for solution by the American government many important problems. The Monroe Doctrine is involved and through it a number of questions affecting citizens and subjects of European nations and our own relations with their respective governments have come up for decision. The sovereignty of Mexico is at stake. The justice, propriety and expediency of declarations by the United States as to matters lying purely within the scope of the internal politics of Mexico are both upheld and denied. Indeed our government has been charged with having openly favored one faction in Mexican politics as against another, with having assumed a partisan attitude and having maintained such a position in spite of the manifest dangers of complications which might seriously embarrass our government and affect the privileges and rights of its citizens.

In all the discussion that has ensued since the authorities at Washington decided not to recognize the government of General Victoriano Huerta, with all the consideration that has evidently been given by our statesmen to other phases of the problem, it is most strange that the rights of one class of American citizens have been persistently ignored by our government and have apparently not been considered by the American public.

The fifty thousand American citizens who, before the conflict began in 1910, were living in various parts of Mexico, have been vitally concerned in the crisis, not only because, by their nearness to the scene of disorder and war, they have been the first to suffer, but what is far more important because misunderstandings and doubts have arisen as to their rights as American citizens.

Almost at the outset of the first revolution early in the year 1911 the President of the United States issued a proclamation directing American citizens resident in Mexico to return to the United States, abandoning their homes, factories, banks, shops and other enter-

prises and leaving their interests subject to the caprices of the contending factions in Mexican politics or at the mercy of the hordes of bandits who almost immediately began to ply their old trade of highway robbery so long suppressed under the beneficent régime of Porfirio Diaz. This proclamation and the principles or rules derivable therefrom, defining the rights of American citizens in similar circumstances, received the apparent endorsement of the present administration at Washington, because an exactly similar proclamation was issued in the summer of 1913.

Aroused to consider the limits and restrictions, as well as the privileges of their status as American citizens resident in a foreign country, by the promulgation of these two proclamations, the members of the American colony throughout Mexico sought to obtain from their government a definite, clear-cut and comprehensive statement on which they could rely in their future relations as residents in a foreign country. Actuated by motives of the highest patriotism, with the desire of informing their government as to the real conditions in Mexico, many of the prominent members of the colony offered to give to the government the benefit of their years of acquaintance with Mexico and Mexicans. How were these offers received? In every case the first question asked of the American so proffering his testimony was as to whether or not he had material interests in Mexico. Naturally in every case the reply was, certainly, the witness had there his home, his business, his friends and his family. In every case the fact of such material interest was considered by government officials as an absolute disqualification of the witness and he was refused an opportunity to testify. Ordinarily the rules of evidence are less strictly applied by administrative than by judicial officers, but no court would be worthy of respect which would refuse to accept the testimony of a witness simply because he might be interested in the subject matter under consideration by the court.

Not only has the testimony of individual Americans been thus refused time and time again by officials of the United States government, but duly constituted committees representing large bodies of American citizens have been denied an audience by representatives of their government solely on the ground that they were interested materially in Mexico and therefore were absolutely disqualified to testify as to the things which they of all men might be expected best

to understand by reason of their very residence among the Mexican people.

The foregoing statements outline the attitude of the United States government toward its citizens in foreign countries as indicated by its acts during the past three years with reference to Americans in Mexico. Apparently the position of the government is founded on three propositions: First, Americans who go to a foreign country go primarily to further their own selfish concerns; second, being prejudiced by selfish interests the opinions of such Americans are warped and not entitled to respect or consideration; and third, if an American goes to a foreign country, he must be considered as having understood and assumed all the risks of residence in such country and must by the very fact of his expatriation be held to have waived all claim for consideration and protection as an American citizen.

These propositions present to Americans resident in foreign countries, to their friends at home who are interested in their safety and welfare, and to all American citizens at home and abroad who prize their citizenship and love their country, a most astounding situation. Are these propositions supported by the facts and should the conclusion reached by the American government be approved by the American people?

At the very outset of the discussion one fact should be clearly understood and fully appreciated. Whatever may have been the fact in years past, it is most emphatically true today that Americans in Mexico (and the same is true of every other civilized country where American citizens have gone in the legitimate pursuit of commerce, trade and business) are *not* ticket-of-leave men, fly-by-nights, criminals and scapegoats, but, on the contrary, they comprise among their numbers men in every profession, trade and line of industry, to claim fellow-citizenship with whom would confer an honor on the best citizens who remain within the geographical confines of their country. Nor are these men in their self-expatriation actuated solely by the desire to "get rich quick," to make their fortunes in a foreign land because conditions there may be more propitious than in their own country. Modern business is most complex. It is impossible to say at what point the beneficent influence upon the well-being of all the people, flowing from the activities of a great commercial enterprise ceases, even when that point is far beyond

the geographical limits of the country. The humble clerk who assists in the distribution of American goods at some remote corner of the earth is contributing his small share toward the payment of the wages of the men who manufactured the goods, who, in turn, by spending their wages in the markets of the mother country, extend to thousands of others not connected with the industry or enterprise which claims the services of the clerk, shipping agent or salesman in a foreign land, a participation in the benefits realized from the work of the far-away American living under a foreign flag. Even though the influence of the single individual may be small, in the aggregate the efforts of fifty thousand Americans engaged in legitimate pursuits in a foreign land may make all the difference between prosperity and depression in the mother country, so delicate is the structure of our modern commerce.

It is absurd to suppose that the men who are chosen by the executive heads of great business corporations to take charge of their foreign offices, that the lawyers, doctors and engineers who serve their American clients in foreign countries, that the men who in subordinate positions comprise part of the great army of Americans in foreign countries are any less worthy of credence than men of the same class and station who remain in their native land. In fact, where, as in the consideration of the Mexican problem, it becomes necessary to understand and interpret the motives and actions of a people of another race with different ideals and different habits of thought, such men as these Americans of all classes ought to be especially qualified to report on conditions in the country where they have lived and worked, many of them for a quarter of a century.

Unfortunately there are too many of the stay-at-home Americans who passively accept the third proposition announced by the American government as correct. It seems very easy for many to say that the Americans who go to a foreign country must take their chances and fight their own battles. If this attitude were the result of a serious consideration of the various elements entering into the problem, it would be alarming indeed as indicating a decadence of that spirit of loyalty and patriotism which achieved independence, preserved the union and now has welded the elements of American citizenship into a powerful force for the advancement of civilization, peace and prosperity throughout the world. It must, however, be assumed that the American living a protected

life in the midst of the highest civilization the world has ever known, guarded on all sides by the watchful agents of his government, has given no thought whatsoever to the problems of his fellow citizen living in the midst of foreigners and without those influences and agencies which surround the citizen in his home land. It must be not callousness but carelessness that is responsible for the failure of the voice of public opinion to make itself heard when an American citizen comes to grief in a foreign country. Surely the ties of blood, interest and nationality are as strong with us as they are with our British cousins and yet what a different sight is seen in England when a British subject is menaced or harmed! Press and public unite in demanding that the person or nation guilty of treating with disrespect any Englishman, however humble, be forthwith called to account by the officers of the British crown who are the representatives of British sovereignty at home and abroad. It is because of this intense feeling of nationality that the British people have been able to extend their influence into remote corners of the earth and that Englishmen have been found for more than a century living the typical life of English gentlemen in the deserts of Africa, the jungles of Ceylon and the mountains of Mexico.

No patriotic American could wish to see his country's flag capitalized for merely mercenary profits by reckless promoters. Any illegitimate attempt to secure or maintain an improper commercial or legal advantage by claiming American citizenship and the protection that might be afforded on that account by the American government would be justly condemned by every patriotic American, but if we are to acquire and preserve the right ideals of American citizenship, there must be inculcated into the minds of all Americans, and particularly those of the great stay-at-home class, the conviction that American citizenship must be made to be a vital and valuable right and that the man who is so fortunate as to be able to claim that citizenship may count on the moral, political and, in the last analysis, military support and protection of his fellow citizens and of his government.

This conception of the significance of citizenship is not by any means new. The supreme court of the United States, in the celebrated slaughter house cases, in a discussion of the rights involved in American citizenship, announced that it is one privilege of an American citizen to be protected in his person, life and property

while in a foreign country. In other words, the declaration that all men are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, applies not only to all men who stay within the geographical limits of their own country, but also to all men of that country wherever they may go.

As if foreseeing that this question might shortly come to be a vital issue, the Democratic party, the successful party at the last general election held in the United States, incorporated into its platform a principle substantially identical with the declaration of the supreme court cited above. Theoretically, the administration at Washington is committed to the maintenance and support of the idea that American citizenship is a sacred right to be guarded and respected at home and abroad. Practically, from the viewpoint of the thousands of American citizens who are now living away from the home land, that principle, that ideal has not only not been observed but has apparently been entirely abrogated. This viewpoint has been illustrated by a paraphrase written by an American in Mexico of Kipling's well-known poem, "The Vampire," which bears on a story published in one of the recent magazines portraying the experience of a family of three, father, mother and son, in Mexico during the recent disturbances:

Two fools there were and their son they taught—  
    (Even as you and I)  
That for their honor their Country fought—  
    (But it wasn't the least what their country thought)  
Though the fools, in trouble, their Consul sought  
    (Even as you and I).  
  
But it's not the thought of what time has brought  
    That stings like a white hot brand—  
It's coming to know that our Country don't care  
    (And what have we done that she should not care?)  
And will not understand!

Without considering at all the tremendous loss of prestige throughout Latin America, which has been suffered by the United States during the past three years, the loss of prestige experienced by individual Americans as a result of the known attitude of our government toward them, has been incalculable. Perhaps, though, this crisis may have been necessary in order to bring to the fore this

very question, to rouse the American people and the American government to a proper realization of the seriousness of the subject.

Americans in Mexico have suffered long and patiently through the trying experiences of the past three years and in spite of repeated disappointments their spirits are still buoyed up by the conviction that sometime, somehow, the American public will come to understand their viewpoint and when once there is a general appreciation of the true situation, the ninety million inhabitants of the United States will be found to have just as keen sympathies, just as patriotic devotion as inspired our forefathers to meet other crises and solve other problems in the past; and they will demand that their government, which protects them in the enjoyment of life and liberty, shall also protect all of their fellow citizens everywhere and shall compel every nation throughout the world to extend to American citizens the fullest protections and guaranties and shall require the effective punishment of any individual or body of men who unjustly bring harm to an American citizen.